



Erasmus+

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"Effective strategies in reading education of students"

Reading and comprehension of a work of fiction in English



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The aim of the methodological work:

Secondary school students are obliged to discuss and give own opinions about problems or issues covered in different works. To fulfil the competence approach in advanced level, students must read and understand the works of original literature. I have chosen an extract of Irish Murdock story *The Sandcastle*.

How to achieve the aim:

Students must be motivated to read fiction: stories and novels. They must apprise the value of original literature to get to know cultural diverse.

Students of teenager's age are more eager to watch movies than reading books, so I start with episodes of a movie *Iris* which is about the author Iris Murdoch.

The plan of lessons:

- Iris Murdock. Movie *Iris* 2001 Stars: Judi Dench, Kate Winslet Director: Richard Eyre. (Episodes not more than 15 minutes).
Information to be found about author's life and works.
Presentation to a class.
- Reading of an extract from a story *Sandcastle*. Group work to find answers to given questions. Analysis of characters.
- Role-play with a task to show appropriate character. All class involved to guess who is who.

WHAT IS IRIS MURDOCH?	Novelist; philosopher
INTERESTING FACTS IN IRIS MURDOCH LIFE.	Studied philosophy at Oxford In 1987 was made a Dame by Queen Elizabeth II A member of the Communist Party 1938-1942 As a philosopher and novelist, Iris was truly ahead of her time.
LITERARY CARRER	Novels; short stories, plays Main novels: <i>The Unicorn</i> , <i>the Bell</i> ; <i>the Sea</i>

The Sandcastle (a novel; 1957)

I can recall, as a child, seeing pictures in English children's books of boys and girls playing on the sand and making sandcastles – and I tried to play on my sand. But a Mediterranean beach is not a place for playing on. It is dirty and very dry. The tides never wash the sand or make it firm. When I tried to make a sandcastle, the sand would just run away between my fingers. It was too dry to hold together. And even as I poured sea water over it, the sun would dry it up at once."

Main characters:



Tasks 1:

1. Read an extract from *The Sandcastle*
2. Complete sentences:
3. The text is about..... .
4. Felicity and Don are..... .
5. Bill and Nan can't agree on.....
6. Bill and Nan have arranged to talk about Felicity
7. Felicity has chosen to follow a career as a
8. Bill wants to persuade Don to..... .

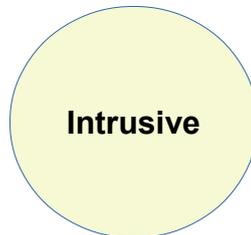
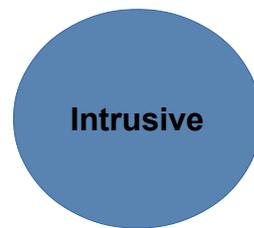
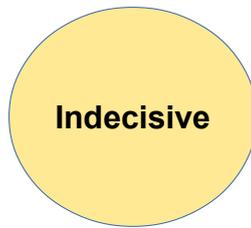
Task 2:

Who of the main characters: Bill; Nan; Felicity or Don might have said the quotation given before. Give reasons.

Task 3

Choose two characters and characterise them. What personality traits do they possess?

Personality traits:



Fill in a card:

Bill	
Personality trait:	
Evidence which implies it:	
Personality trait:	
Evidence which implies it:	

Felicity/or Nan	
Personality trait:	
Evidence which implies it:	
Personality trait:	
Evidence which implies it:	

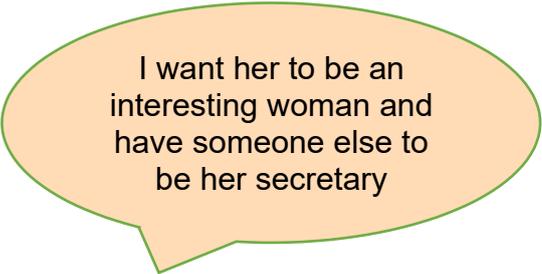
Role-play

The role-play must reveal the main characters qualities. You must choose the appropriate life situation. The participants are Bill; Nan; Felicity or Don.

You must use some quotation from the given text. The place of action can be imagined.

Suggested quotations:

Bill:



Nan:



A Review of the role-play by classmates.

The place of an action.....
The topic of a role play.....
Personality traits of Bill.....
Personality traits of Nan.....
Personality traits of Felicity

An extract from *The Sandcastle* by Iris Murdoch

"I wish Felicity would come," Bill said.

"Don't keep saying that, darling," said Nan. "Can I have your ice-cream spoon? I've used mine to take the gravy off the cloth."

"I think I ought to go into school," said Bill, looking at his watch.

"Lunch isn't over," said Nan, "just because you've finished eating. And the two-fifteen bell hasn't rung yet. Don't forget we must talk to Felicity about her future."

"Must we?" said Bill. This was the sort of provocative reply which he found very hard to check, and by which Nan was unfailingly provoked. A recurring pattern. He was to blame.

"Why do you say 'must we?' in that peculiar tone of voice?" said Nan. She had a knack of uttering such a question in a way which forced Bill to answer her.

"Because I don't know what I think about it," said Bill. He felt a cold sensation which generally preluded his becoming angry.

"Well, I know what I think about it," said Nan. "Our finances and her talents don't leave us much choice, do they?" She looked directly at Bill. Again it was impossible not to reply.

"I suggest we wait a while," said Bill. "Felicity doesn't know her own mind yet." He knew that Nan could go on in this tone for hours and keep quite calm. Arguments would not help him. His only ultimate defence was anger.

"You always pretend people don't know what they want when they don't want what you want," said Nan. "You are funny, Bill. Felicity certainly wants to leave school. And if she's to start on that typing course next year we ought to put her name down now."

"I don't want Felicity to be a typist," said Bill.

"Why not?" said Nan. "She could have a good career. She could be secretary to some interesting man."

"I don't want her to be secretary to some interesting man," said Bill. "I want her to be an interesting woman and have someone else to be her secretary."

"You live in a dream world, Bill," said Nan. "Neither of your children are clever, and you have already caused them both enough unhappiness by pretending they are. You've bullied Don into taking the College exam and you ought to be satisfied with that. If you'd taken our marriage more seriously, you'd try to be more of a realist. You must take some responsibility for the children. I know you have all sorts of fantasies about yourself. But at least try to be realistic about them."

Bill winced. If there was one thing he hated to hear about, it was 'our marriage.' This entity was always mentioned in connection with some particularly dreary project which Nan was trying to persuade him to be unavoidably necessary. He made an effort. "You may be right," he said, "but I still think we ought to wait."

"I know I'm right," said Nan.